

From: Greg Willden
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 9:19am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I would like to comment on the Microsoft Settlement under the statutes of the Tunney Act.

I think that the settlement is very poor and does not properly address the real issues. There are numerous loopholes in the proposed settlement that will allow Microsoft, who has a history of unethical and illegal actions, to transform this penalty into an advantage for them.

In order to restore proper competition I think it necessary for Microsoft to publish the file formats of all their Microsoft Office files. The .doc file format is widely used. If the format were made available then other office productivity suites like WordPerfect, StarOffice, Abiword and OpenOffice could effectively compete with them.

Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) must be allowed to sell a computer that can boot up into more than one Operating System. This has been attempted in the past but has been quashed by Microsoft's legal team. It is suspected that Microsoft is forcing the OEMs into single OS bootloader licenses that disallow this behavior.

These are only a few of the things that Microsoft has done to stifle competition and innovation. For all of Microsoft's talk about being able to innovate. They are doing more to hurt it than they are to help it.

The settlement also needs to have some real teeth. The 'independent' auditors/monitors of Microsoft's behavior need to have complete independence and freedom to discuss any of their findings with the public and press. Unless they are allowed to do this their voices will be too easily silenced.

Microsoft should also have major fines imposed upon it for future violations of the settlement. Fines substantial enough that it will think twice before violating the public trust. And the monies collected from these fines should go to their competitors. I would recommend projects related to the GNU/Linux Operating System. Microsoft has openly acknowledged that Linux is a real competitor. What better way to ensure compliance than to force Microsoft to donate substantial funds to their competitors.

Microsoft has been shown to practice illegal predatory behavior. Do not cave in to them and give them a settlement with so many loopholes. They will exploit it to the detriment of all.

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